

Tennessee Rural Carrier Charged with Stealing Mail

A Tennessee Rural Letter Carrier pled guilty, on June 26, to a one-count Federal information charging her with *Delay or Destruction of Mail or Newspaper by a Postal Service Officer or Employee*.

An investigation by OIG Special Agents revealed the Rural Letter Carrier had been taking mail, assigned for delivery on her route, and placing it in storage units rather than delivering it. Thousands of pieces of mail, including approximately 5,800 First-Class letters were recovered and subsequently delivered to more than 250 postal customers in Sullivan County, Tennessee.

The investigation disclosed the Rural Letter Carrier had rented two storage units in Kingsport, Tennessee. In February, a storage center manager observed multiple bags and bins marked "United States Postal Service," as well as loose pieces of what was obviously undelivered mail, in one of the units rented by the Rural Letter Carrier. He immediately contacted the Postal Service and the OIG.

Special Agents responded and removed the mail from the unit. Based on the postmark dates and addresses on the mail found in the storage unit, it was determined the Rural Letter Carrier would have been responsible for delivering those pieces. A second storage unit rented by the carrier also contained a large amount of undelivered mail. Special Agents determined additional quantities of mail were destroyed by the Rural Letter Carrier who placed it in garbage bags and left it for pickup.

The Rural Letter Carrier resigned from the Postal Service. She is scheduled for sentencing on October 22. A violation of this statute could result in a maximum sentence of 5 years incarceration, a fine of up to \$250,000 and up to 3 years of supervised release. Any restitution will be determined by the court.